

Abstract 658

TITLE: A Comparison of Partner and Relationship Characteristics Reported by HIV Seropositive and Seronegative Girls

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Partner characteristics influence sexual behavior within relationships. In order to understand how reported partner characteristics might vary between HIV+ and HIV- adolescent girls, we compared the reported characteristics of subjects' three most recent sexual partners. We hypothesized that the partners of HIV+ girls would be older, engaged in longer sexual relationships with them, more likely to be HIV+, more likely to be main partners, and more likely to use latex condoms than the partner of HIV girls.

METHODS: Analysis of baseline data from 200 HIV+ and 89 HIV- adolescent girls age 12-18 who were subjects in the REACH project, an observational study of HIV positive and negative youth. All HIV+ youth acquired HIV through sexual contact or needle use. Reported partner characteristics were collected via an Audio Computer Assisted Self Interview (ACASI) for up to three of their recent partners with whom intercourse had occurred in the past three months. Means and frequency distributions describe the findings. Prior to presentation, appropriate tests for statistical significance will be applied.

RESULTS: Of the 200 HIV+ female subjects (mean age 16.81 \pm 1.14), 57 (28.5%) had not engaged in vaginal intercourse in the past three months, 15 did not respond, and 4 did not complete the ACASI. The remaining 124 (62%) subjects described 187 sexual partners. Of the 89 HIV- female subjects (mean age 16.40 \pm 1.29) 18 (20%) had not engaged in vaginal intercourse in the past 3 months, 2 did not respond and 9 did not complete the ACASI. The remaining 60 (67%) subjects described 90 sexual partners. HIV+ subjects' partners were older than HIV- subjects' partners (mean 22.70 yr. \pm 5.49 vs. 20.83 yr. \pm 4.05) and more likely to be HIV+ (27% vs. 8%). Partners were predominately male (97 vs. 98%) and did not differ significantly in perceived intravenous drug use, engagement in sex with other men, sex with other women, or survival sex. HIV+ and -female subjects described similar proportions of sexual partners as their main partner (125/187 (67%) vs. 59/90 (65%)). Mean lengths of sexual relationships were 14.8 months for HIV+ subjects and 11.05 months for HIV subjects. Fifty-seven out of 124 (46%) HIV+ subjects and 11/60 (18%) HIV- subjects reported 100% condom use with vaginal intercourse in the past 3 months.

CONCLUSIONS: On average, both HIV+ and HIV- girls in our cohort reported current partners who were more than 4 years older than themselves. HIV+ girls reported partners who were nearly six years older than themselves. Relationships reported by HIV+ girls were slightly longer than those reported by HIV- girls and their partners were more likely to be known or suspected HIV+. A higher percentage of HIV+ girls reported condom use by partners 100% of the time. Behavioral interventions directed toward HIV+ and/or high-risk girls need to consider how partner characteristics, particularly the older age of current partners and partner serostatus, will influence decisions regarding condom use and sexual behavior.

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